Unit 4
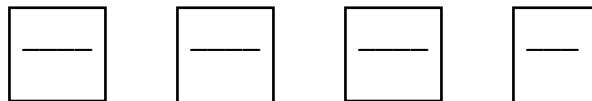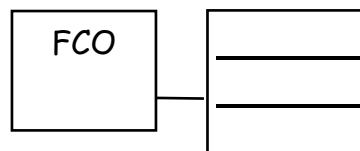
Response Operations

Check Your Knowledge

1. What is the relationship among NIMS, the NRP, and ICS?

2. ESFs are organized based on _____.

3. Unity of Command, span of control, common terminology, standardized operating structure, and ability to expand and contract are features of _____.

4. Fill in the following typical ERT chart with the correct personnel titles:

5. What are the four emergency teams that each FEMA region must maintain?

Check Your Knowledge

Answers

1. NIMS establishes consistent standards, protocols, and procedures so that all responders can work together effectively. The NRP is the plan for implementing the procedures and policies set forth in NIMS. The ICS is the structure used to manage actual incidents and achieve specific objectives.

2. Function.

3. ICS.

4.   FCO   Safety Officer
                                     Liaison Officer
                                     Information Officer

Operations	Planning	Logistics	Finance/Admin.
Section	Section	Section	Section
Chief	Chief	Chief	Chief

5. ERT-A, ERT, RNA, RST.

Response Operations

Overview

The focus of response operations is to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. This requires the cooperation and collaboration of local, State, and Federal agencies to achieve maximum results. Local governments are charged with conducting immediate response activities. The State assesses needs and commits additional resources, and FEMA manages and coordinates disaster assistance from a variety of Federal departments and agencies. At each level, consistency and continuity of service are established by the **National Incident Management System (NIMS)**, the **National Response Plan (NRP)**, and the **Incident Command System (ICS)**. This unit will focus on the purpose and application of these three sources of guidance. In addition, the role of the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) and emergency teams will be discussed.

At the conclusion of the unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of response operations.

- Describe NIMS.

- Describe the NRP.

- Describe ICS, and list three key features.

- Explain the relationship among NIMS, the NRP, and ICS.

- Describe the purpose of the ESFs.

- Create an organizational chart for a natural disaster at a typical JFO.

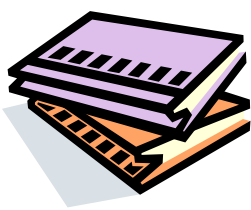- List five emergency response teams, and describe their functions.

Common Direction and Unifying Guidance

Multiple agencies and levels of government work together in response operations. It is essential that they share a common focus, work compatibly, and seek mutual outcomes. Three sources of guidance exist to help provide this type of unified approach:

The National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The National Response Plan (NRP)

The Incident Command System (ICS)

NIMS was created to provide a comprehensive, national approach to incident management. It is applicable to all jurisdictional levels across functional disciplines. It establishes standard incident management processes, procedures, and protocols so all responders can work together with maximum effectiveness. The components included in NIMS are:

- Command and Management

- Preparedness

- Resource Management

- Communications and Information Management

- Supporting Technologies

- Ongoing Management and Maintenance

The **NRP** is a comprehensive plan that aligns a multitude of Federal incident management and emergency response plans into an effective and efficient structure. The NRP brings together coordination structures, capabilities, and resources. It is a unified, all-hazards approach to domestic incident management. The NRP serves as the blueprint for how multiple agencies work together to respond to an incident.

Features of the NRP

Application	Has wide applicability across a spectrum of activities including prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery.
Scope	Covers a full range of complex, changing requirements. Addresses site-specific activities as well as regional/national issues related to an incident.
Maintenance	Involves periodic updating to incorporate new Presidential directives, legislative changes, and procedural changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events.
Support Functions	Identifies Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) and assigns them to specific agencies.

The NRP provides the overarching, coordinating structures, processes, and protocols to be followed in responding to an Incident of National Significance.
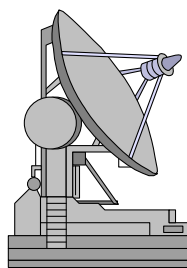
Role of Emergency Support Functions

To facilitate the provision of Federal assistance, the NRP uses a functional approach to group the types of Federal assistance that a State is most likely to need under the 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). Each ESF is headed by a primary agency that has been selected based on its authorities, resources, and capabilities in the particular functional area. Other agencies have been designated as support agencies for one or more ESFs based on their resources and capabilities to support the functional area.

The ESFs and their coordinating agencies are as follows:

		Title	**Coordinating Agency**
•	ESF-1:	Transportation	DOT
•	ESF-2:	Communications	DHS/IAIP/NCS
•	ESF-3:	Public Works and Engineering	DOD/USACE
•	ESF-4:	Fire Fighting	USDA/FS
•	ESF-5:	Emergency Management	DHS/FEMA
•	ESF-6:	Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services	DHS/FEMA
•	ESF-7:	Resource Support	GSA
•	ESF-8:	Public Health and Medical Services	HHS
•	ESF-9:	Urban Search and Rescue	DHS/FEMA
•	ESF-10:	Oil and Hazardous Materials Response	EPA
•	ESF-11:	Agriculture and Natural Resources	USDA
•	ESF-12:	Energy	DOE
•	ESF-13:	Public Safety and Security	DHS/DOJ
•	ESF-14:	Long-Term Community Recovery and Mitigation	DHS/FEMA
•	ESF-15:	External Affairs	DHS

Depending on the situation, a response may require no ESF presence, some ESF involvement, or activation of most or all ESFs. When ESFs are activated, their representatives work on emergency teams to provide needed support and services. Most ESFs are incorporated into the Operations Section at the JFO.

Emergency Teams

The NRP identifies several emergency teams that are established to respond to an incident. Some teams are identified before an incident takes place. Other teams are developed after the incident and are formed to meet the specific needs of that incident. The table below describes the purpose and the responsibilities of each team.

Title	Purpose	Description
ERT-A Emergency Response Team Advanced	To work with the State to obtain information on the impact of the event and to identify specific State needs for Federal assistance.	Deployed by the RRCC to State operating facilities. Can include RNA personnel and appropriate ESF representatives. Makes preliminary arrangements to set up Federal field facilities. May establish an Interim Operations Facility (IOF) as a facility until the JFO is established. Team members are pre-identified to facilitate rapid response. Headed by team leader from FEMA. Consists of program and support staff and representatives from selected ESF primary agencies.
FIRST Federal Incident Response Team	To support the Federal response on-site at the event within 12 hours of notification.	A forward component of the ERT-A, deployed by FEMA. Provides technical assistance in assessing the situation, identifying critical and unmet needs, making protective action recommendations, and identifying potential targets for Federal assistance. Oversees on-site Federal assistance which could include critical life-saving and life-sustaining items. Becomes part of the Operations Section when the ERT is established.
ERT-N Emergency Response Team National	To coordinate damage assessment, Mission Assignments for direct Federal assistance, and selection of locations for field facilities with the State.	Deployed by the Secretary of Homeland Security for large-scale, high-impact incidents. Consists of pre-assigned staff from FEMA HQ, regional offices, and other Federal agencies. Three ERT-N teams are structured, with each team on call every third month. Fourth team on call year-round to manage incidents in the National Capital Region. Works with the RRCC and NRCC to ensure smooth integration of national and regional assets.

Title	Purpose	Description
ERT Emergency Response Team	To staff the JFO and achieve the incident objectives.	Principal interagency group deployed to the JFO by FEMA. Composed of FEMA staff and ESF personnel. Ensures Federal resources are available to meet Federal incident management and State requirements. Size and composition of the ERT is flexible and scalable depending on scope and magnitude of the incident. Headed by the FCO.
DEST Domestic Emergency Support Team	To provide technical support for management of potential or actual terrorist incidents.	Deployed by the Attorney General in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. Serves as a stand-alone advisory team at the JFO or incident location.
RST Regional Support Team	To staff the RRCC, monitor incidents within the home region, and coordinate with the affected States.	Deployed by the Region. Coordinates early response operations with a State. Usually the first Federal emergency team activated to deal with an incident. Supports deployment of the ERT-A. Receives assessment information and provides operational response to requests from the ERT-A.
Other Federal Teams	To support incident management and disaster response and recovery operations.	Depending on the needs of a specific incident, a variety of additional Federal teams may be used. Examples include: • Veterinary Medical Assistance Teams (VMATs) • Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORTs) • Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs)

Emergency teams perform a variety of essential functions. Some are tailored to meet specific needs identified in the assessment phase of disaster response. Other teams are pre-identified to ensure prompt response. Each region maintains an ERT-A, an RST, RNA personnel, and cadres of personnel to staff the ERT.

Incident Facilities

The NRP describes the primary facilities that emergency teams may utilize to position resources and to achieve incident objectives during response operations.

The following table shows the location and function of each facility:

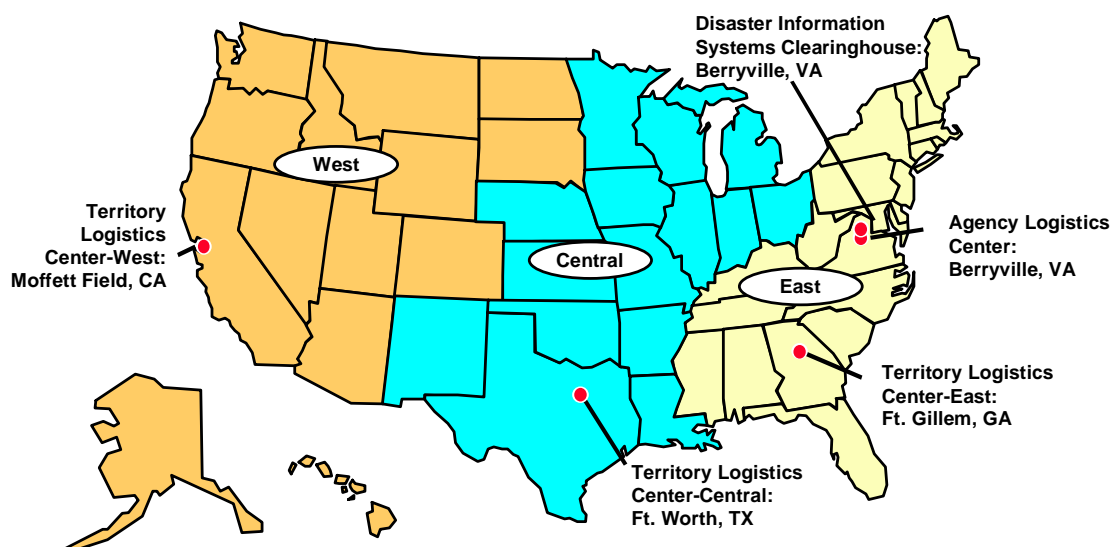| Facility Name	Function
NRCC National Response Coordination Center	Multi-agency center located at FEMA Headquarters. Multi-agency center that provides overall Federal response coordination of Incidents of National Significance. Operates on a 24/7 basis and monitors potential/developing incidents. Supports response efforts of regional and field components. Resolves Federal assistance conflicts and implementation issues forwarded by the JFO.
RRCC Regional Response Coordination Center	Regional center that serves as the Federal government's immediate emergency operations center in an affected region. Operates during initial period following an incident. This facility is also operational for pre-incident events such as a hurricane.
IOF Interim Operating Facility	Temporary field facility used by a FEMA-led ERT in the early stages of an incident prior to establishing the JFO. Generally located near the State EOC or the incident site. Site of interaction with State representatives and key ESF agencies, collection and assessment of information, and initiation of assistance programs.
JFO Joint Field Office	Multi-agency coordination center established near the incident site. Provides central location for coordination of Federal, State, local, Tribal, nongovernmental, and private-sector organizations. Enables the effective and efficient coordination of Federal prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.
DRC Disaster Recovery Center	Satellite component of the JFO. Central facility, separate from the JFO, where individuals can obtain information on disaster assistance programs available from various agencies.

Other types of facilities may also be utilized in disaster response activities. These include:

- Mobilization centers

- Territorial logistics centers

- Staging areas

- Bases

- Camps

A **Mobilization Center** is a facility established by the emergency team Logistics staff to receive and dispatch response personnel and resources.

- Federal resources may be pre-positioned at a Mobilization Center until they are requested by the State.

- Mobilization Centers are established by FEMA, with assistance from the Government Services Administration (GSA) and the United States Forest Service (USFS), as needed.

- An Incident Management Team (IMT) is a USFS managed unit with primary responsibility, when tasked by FEMA, for setting up and operating Mobilization Centers.

Territorial Logistics Centers are locations where commodities, supplies, and equipment are warehoused for shipment to emergency or disaster sites when needed.
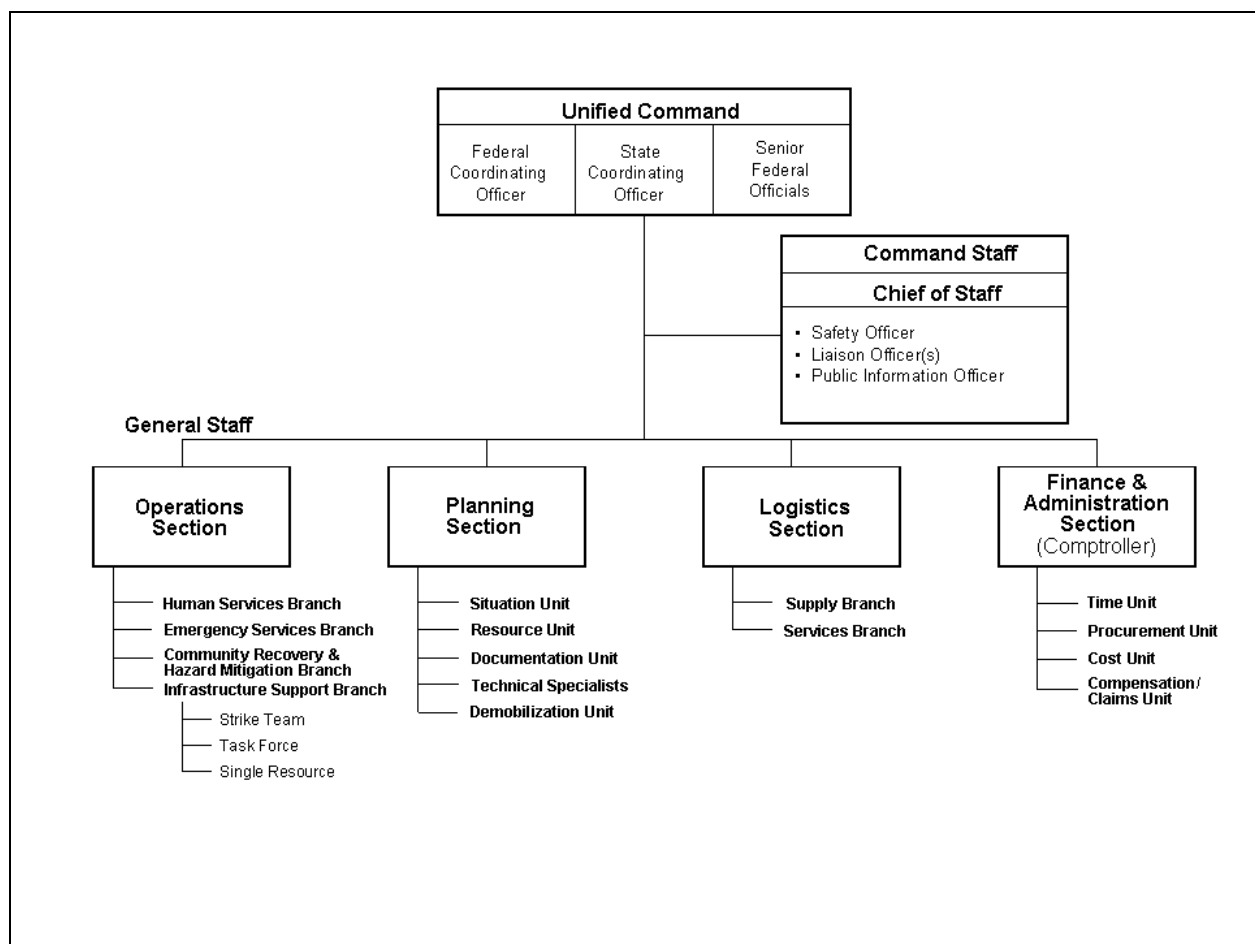

The type and scope of a particular incident determine the type and number of support facilities that will be put into place.

The Incident Command System

The third source of guidance which helps ensure the consistency and continuity of disaster assistance recovery programs is the Incident Command System (ICS). This system, along with NIMS and the NRP, provides structure and uniformity for response operations. It is the management system that is used to identify the objectives for a specific incident and oversee the resources needed to achieve those objectives. The ICS structure can be applied to all incidents. It can be expanded or contracted to meet the demands of a particular incident.

The typical ICS organization chart at a JFO is shown below:

The following is a list of key features of ICS:

- Applies across all emergency management disciplines.

- Applies to a broad range of incidents from small to complex.

- Uses a management by objectives approach.

- Utilizes an Incident Action Plan (IAP).

- Is organized by function.

- Standardizes operating structures.

- Allows for organizational flexibility.

- Establishes common terminology.

ICS establishes accountability at all levels of the management structure. This is done by limiting supervisory responsibility for managers. The span of control is one supervisor for a maximum of seven staff members. If incident needs require additional personnel, a section, branch, or unit may be further divided into components with additional supervisory staff. Also, ICS uses unity of command which means that every individual has a designated supervisor. These principles clarify reporting relationships and eliminate confusion. ICS includes Command Staff and General Staff components. Command and General staff members work together to identify, plan for, and achieve the incident objectives.

Summary

Effective response operations require the smooth integration of Federal, State, Tribal, and local resources. NIMS, the NRP, and the ICS have been designed for that express purpose. They provide a consistent and cohesive set of procedures, processes, and plans that guide numerous agencies in disaster response operations. They offer clear guidelines with regard to facilities, emergency teams, response functions, and incident management structure.